



News Release

Office of the Louisiana State Fire Marshal
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Louisiana Responds to Alabama Catastrophic Disaster

LOUISIANA STATE POLICE : *COURTESY LOYALTY SERVICE*
Colonel Michael D. Edmonson, Superintendent

BATON ROUGE – Today, the state was notified that Alabama needs USAR Teams to deploy to Tuscaloosa, and a 120 person USAR team from Louisiana of K-9 Search and Logistical Support is making preparations to deploy.

Immediately after learning of the devastation caused by the storms in Alabama, Colonel Mike Edmonson, Deputy Secretary of Department of Public Safety, reached out to Colonel Hugh McCall, Director for the Alabama Department of Public Safety, and offered assistance.

The Louisiana State Police immediately placed on standby a team of 20 troopers from the agency's Mobile Field Force. These troopers are specially trained in the areas of safety, security and crowd control especially as it relates to man-made or weather related emergencies. Additionally, Colonel Edmonson has directed a Louisiana State Trooper to deploy to the Alabama DPS Emergency Operation Center to act as a liaison on his behalf.

Edmonson said, "Partnerships have been a pillar within my Administration. If there is one thing we have learned through past experience, it is that the importance of partnerships stretch far beyond Louisiana's borders. It is a privilege for the Department of Public Safety to provide personnel, resources and logistical support to our neighbors in Alabama. Our thoughts and prayers remain with those affected by these devastating storms and our commitment to help remains strong."

Colonel Edmonson also directed State Fire Marshal Butch Browning to initiate preparations for possible deployment of the State's Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams. Today, Chief Browning was notified that the State of Alabama was indeed requesting USAR Teams to deploy to Tuscaloosa, Alabama. A 120 person USAR team consisting of K-9 Search and Logistical Support is preparing to deploy and their mission will be to conduct building and secondary searches in the affected areas. Chief Browning has activated the three LA Core Teams and the Office of State Fire Marshal (OSMF) Support Team. The current commitments are as follows:

TF-1 (New Orleans Region) 40 personnel and USAR equipment,
TF-2 (Baton Rouge Region) 25 personnel and USAR equipment,
TF-3 (Shreveport/Bossier Region) 35 personnel and USAR equipment,
OSFM Support 12 personnel and State USAR Truck,
K-9 Search dogs 8 (from St. Tammany and Shreveport).

A representative from the OSFM will serve as the Mission Coordinator and has already deployed with a forward team to coordinate arrival of the USAR Teams. The Teams are expected to deploy at 6AM tomorrow morning.

Browning said, "The Louisiana Fire Service is proud to answer the call to assist our neighbors in Alabama. We know well how it feels to experience tragedy and how the kindness of others is necessary."

Background on the State of Louisiana's USAR Teams:

In 2008, Governor Jindal placed USAR under the administration of the Office of State Fire Marshal and allocated 1.4 million for the initial purchase of equipment in three regions of the State (New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Shreveport).

A five year plan was developed so that by 2013 the State would have smaller collapse teams in all regions of the state.

Currently, there is an active regional team in the Alexandria Region.

All teams are fully deployable.

The State's USAR truck is equipped with technical rescue assets that support the regional teams and is operated by the OSFM and centrally located in Alexandria.

Teams are capable of rescuing persons trapped in building collapses, underground, or in a high rise incident.

The regional teams have been placed on standby for a number of incidents throughout Louisiana as well as made several local deployments.

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